

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendment, claims 1-2 and 5-17 will be all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate claims 3 and 4, which have been canceled. In addition, claims 5 and 6 have been amended to depend from claim 1 so that the claims do not depend from a canceled claim.

Applicants respectfully submit that with the entry of the proposed amendments, the present application will be in condition for allowance. Since the amendments raise no new issues, entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

I. Response to Rejection of Claims 1-3 and 5-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3 and 5-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Inaba et al. (US Patent 6,074,724) in view of any one or more of Nishimatsu et al. (US Patent 4,596,747), Shimozawa et al. (US Patent 4,746,558) and Bilkadi (US Patent 5,639,546) for the reasons of record.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that the cited references do not teach or suggest the present invention for the reasons set forth in the previous response. However, without acquiescing in the merits of the rejection and to advance prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate claim 4, which has been indicated as allowable.

It is respectfully submitted that the references do not teach or suggest the present invention according to amended claim 1. In addition, claims 2 and 5-17 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that these claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

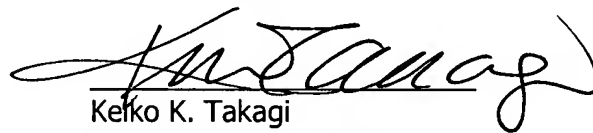
II. Conclusion

For the above reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-2 and 5-17 is respectfully requested.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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